Preparing to Airbrush, Continued

Steps in airbrushing

Steps in airbrushing follow a logical sequence. The following table lists a series of steps that will assist you in developing airbrush illustrations.

To airbrush illustrations:

Step	Action
1	Prepare a comprehensive thumbnail sketch indicating desired color and shading.
2	Prepare a full sized illustration on a suitable substrate.
3	Cover areas you do NOT want painted with masks or friskets.
4	Mix pigments to proper consistency and strain out lumps or imperfections. Test the mixture on a piece of scrap paper.
5	Adjust your work center. Arrange your table so that you hold the airbrush at a 90° angle to the work surface and sit upright.
6	Place the airbrush in your hand and begin air painting. The painted areas should dry almost immediately. If paint runs, blow dry with airbrush held approximately 10 inches from the painting surface.
6	The first coverage of paint should be light. Build up tones gradually using successive layers of paint.
8	Allow the paint to dry.
9	Remove masks and friskets.
10.	Remove residual adhesive from the friskets.
11.	Touch up areas disturbed by the frisket.
12.	Add small details by hand with brushes or other tools.
13.	Add highlights.

Even Tones

Introduction

Creating an even tone is a demanding task with the airbrush, particularly when air painting in transparent color. An even tone is less difficult to accomplish with an opaque medium. Practice rendering even tones on cheap drawing paper.

Even tones

Even tones have no modulation in color or visual texture. It is a solid blanket of color. Even tones applied gradually 'by successive layers appear to have more depth than heavily applied pigment.

To airbrush even tones:

Step	Action
1	Prepare a simple paper mask.
2	Using masking tape, tape the mask to the paper surface allowing the tape to overlap onto the paper by 1/8 inch.
3	Press tape down firmly to avoid paint seepage.
4	Air paint across the top of the paper from left to right, allowing the spray to overlap the top of the tape.
5	Direct the return stroke from right to left and proceed down the paper until the last stroke overlaps the tape. All strokes should overlap slightly.
6	Keep the first coverage light, increasing darkness with successive strokes.
7	Allow both the paper and the mask to dry before carefully removing the mask.

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Even Tones, Continued

Even tones (Continued)

Figure 6-19 illustrates the procedure for airbrushing even tones.

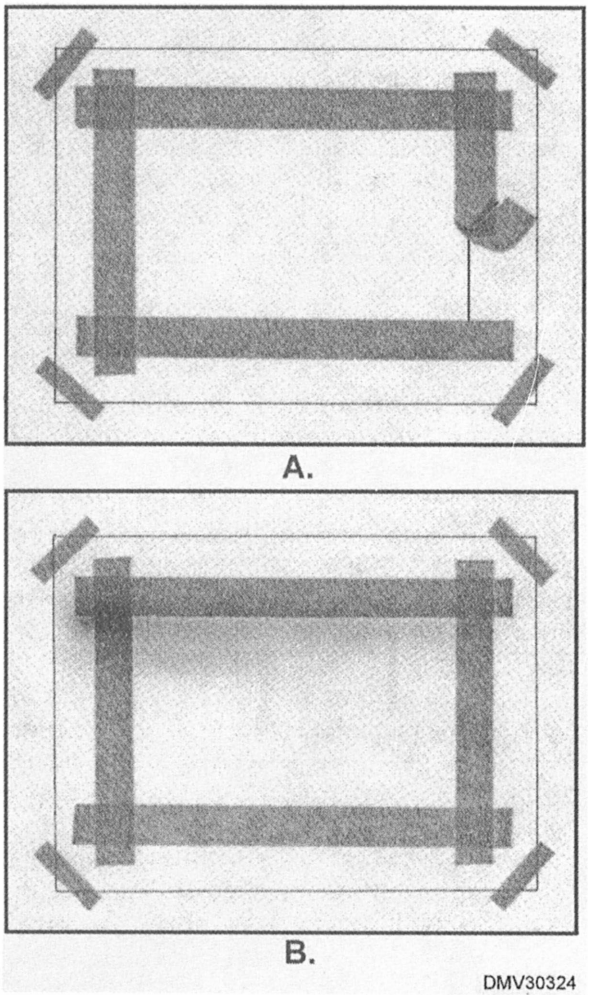

Figure 6-19.—Airbrushing even tones: A. Mask the borders; B. Spray from top down.

Graduated Tones

Introduction

Control of the airbrush is a matter of practice. After you learn to paint even tones, begin practicing the techniques for applying graduated tones.

Graduated tones

Graduated tones have colors that vary in density. The colors may go from light to dark, dark to light, or fluctuate back and forth. Air paint graduated tones working from dark to light.

To airbrush graduated tones:

Step	Action
1	Prepare a simple paper mask.
2	Using masking tape, tape the mask to the paper surface allowing the tape to overlap onto the paper by 1/8 inch.
3	Working from left to right, begin airbrushing dark values at the top of the page working into light values at the bottom of the page.
4	Return stroke from right to left. Allow the paint to fade off completely before reaching the light areas at the bottom of the page.
	Continue to airbrush, starting this time from the bottom of the page.
	Proceed up the page stopping just short of the first pass.
	Continue to airbrush from the bottom of the page stopping short of each of the previous passes each time. Builds up values by repeated coverage.

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Graduated tones (Continued)

Figure 6-20 shows a graduated tone.

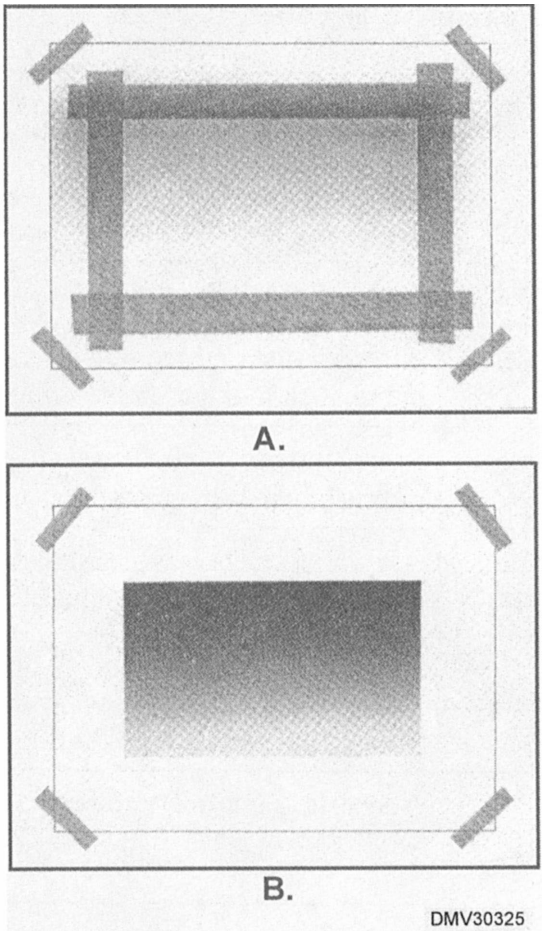

Figure 6-20.—Airbrushing graduated tones: A. Airbrush dark values at the top; B. Build up values.

Spot Effects

Introduction

The spot effect is simple to produce and effectively adds depth to an illustration.

Spot effect

The spot effect appears as a spot of light on a darker field. The most important thing to remember about creating a spot effect is to bend your wrist upward without moving your entire arm, raising the spray pattern slightly. This movement rounds the corners and forms the spot in the center.

To airbrush a spot effect:

Step	Action
1	Cut a simple paper mask with a square opening.
2	Tape the edges of the mask to the paper surface.
3	Turn the paper counterclockwise so that one corner faces you.
4	Airbrush two or three passes across the corner. Most of the pigment should fall on the mask at this point.
5	Rotate the paper (counterclockwise), taking each corner in turn and airbrush two or three passes in each corner.
6	After all four corners are sprayed, air paint about ½ inch of each corner in color fading gradually into the highlight area. The transition should be smooth with the spot fairly light and about ½ inch of solid color at each corner.
7	Spray a light tone along the edge of the mask.
8	Allow the paint to dry thoroughly before removing the mask.

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Spot effects (Continued)

Figure 6-21 illustrates how to airbrush a corner and the finished spot effect.

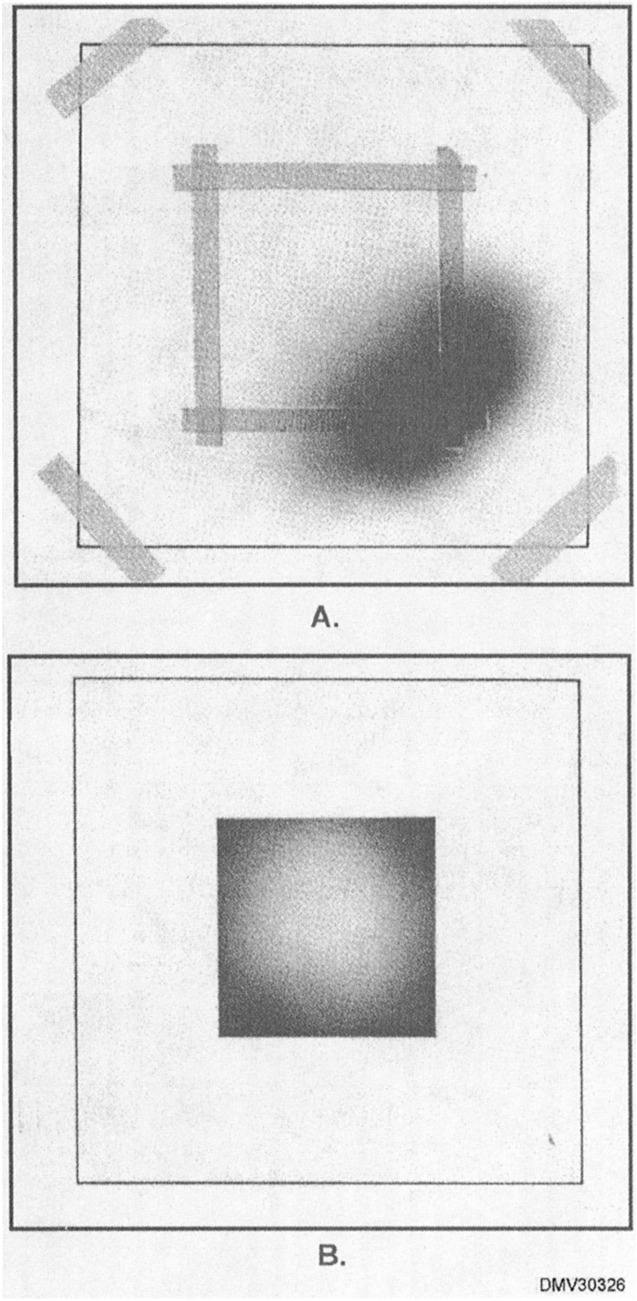

Figure 6-21.—Airbrushing: A. A corner of the spot effect; B. The spot effect.

Metallic Effects

Introduction

As your airbrush skills develop, you should attempt more difficult effects like a metallic shine. The harder an effect is to produce, the more essential it is to have a comprehensive sketch or layout to follow. With metallic effects, concentrate on defining the contrasts between dark and light tones on reflective surfaces. Airbrushed metallic effects come very close to visually portraying mirrors, glass, and chrome.

Metallic effects

Metallic effects are the shine or reflectance from metal objects struck by intense light. Shiny objects have little or no local color of their own but reflect the color of the objects that surround them. The sharp contrasts in dark and light tones are defined by hard-edged lines. Work from dark to light when creating metallic effects.

To airbrush metallic effects:

Step	Action
1	Place a mask or frisket over your illustration.
2	Remove the frisket from the areas to be painted in the darkest tone (black in figure 6-22). Paint and allow to dry.
3	Remove the frisket from the areas to be painted in grey (figure 6-23). Paint and allow to dry.
4	Remove the remaining frisket and recover the illustration with a new sheet of frisket.
5	Cut along the outline of the object and remove the frisket covering the background.
6	Spray shadows freehand. Spraying in a shadow area creates depth and provides a three-dimensional impression (figure 6-24).
7	Lightly spray over the entire background. Allow to dry.
8	Remove the frisket (figure 6-25).
9	Clean and touch up illustrations with highlights.

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Metallic effects (Continued)

Figure 6-22 shows a drawing with the darkest tone (black) painted.

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Figure 6-22.—A line outline with the darkest tone (black) painted.

Figure 6-23 shows the drawing with a lighter tone (diluted black) painted.

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Figure 6-23.—Illustration with a lighter tone (diluted black) added.

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Metallic effects (Continued)

Figure 6-24 illustrates how shadows sprayed behind the object lend depth.

Figure 6-24.—Shadows sprayed behind the object lend depth.

Figure 6-25 is the finished illustration with the background evenly sprayed behind the object.

Figure 6-25.—The finished illustration with an evenly toned shadow area.

Special Effects

Introduction

Any effect the airbrush produces may be used for special effects in the right situation. Selectively create special effects and use them to enhance your illustrations.

Special effects

Special effects are effects created to enhance illustrations by emphasizing texture, color, or shapes. You may create special effects by varying air pressure, raising or moving masks, increasing or decreasing the distance between the airbrush and paper, and changing the angle of airbrush to paper surface.

Varying air pressure

Reducing the air pressure from the air source to the airbrush will make the pigment heavier to transport in the air. This results in a granulated or stipple effect.

Figure 6-26 is an example of granulation resulting from reduced air pressure.

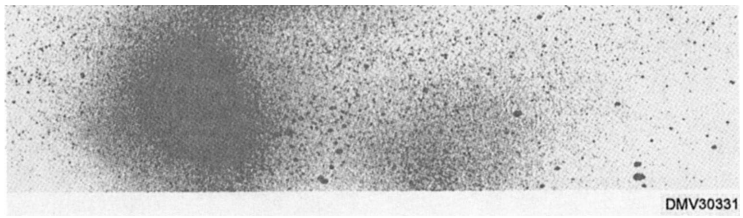

Figure 6-26.—Granulation resulting from air pressure less than 25-30 PSI.

Increasing air pressure from the air source to the airbrush provides more air than the pigment needs to reach its destination. The result is a random spatter with a fine mist of over spray.

Figure 6-27 is an example of splatter.

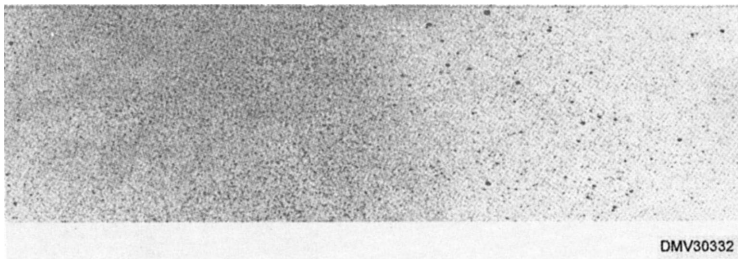

Figure 6-27.—Splatter created by air pressure in excess of 25-30 PSI.

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Raising, lowering, or moving masks

Raising, lowering, or moving masks will create different edge definitions. Creating a mask with a patterned edge will also create special effects. Raising a mask creates a soft edge. The higher a mask is raised, the softer the edge created. Raising the edge of masks permits the fine spray of paint to seep under the edge of the mask to the paper.

Figure 6-28 is an example of raised masks.

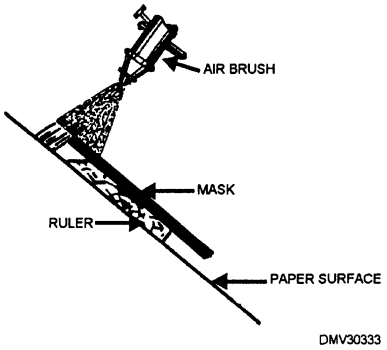

Figure 6-28.—A raised mask.

Lowering a mask creates a hard-edged line. Any weight or tape may hold a mask in place on a drawing.

Figure 6-29 is a line created by a mask placed directly on the paper surface.

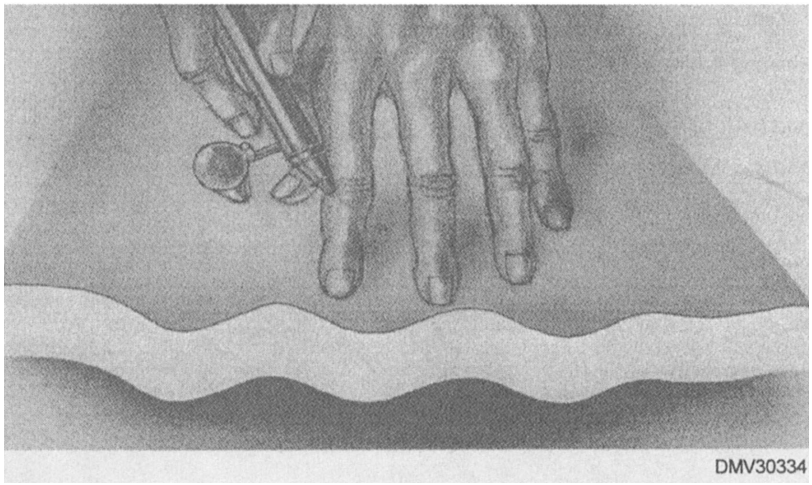

Figure 6-29.—Using a direct contact mask to create a hard edge.

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Raising, lowering, or moving masks (Continued)

Moving masks creates a layering effect that was popular in the thirties and forties. The pigment may be sprayed in the same color or in different colors.

Figure 6-30 shows a layering effect created by moving masks repeatedly around an illustration.

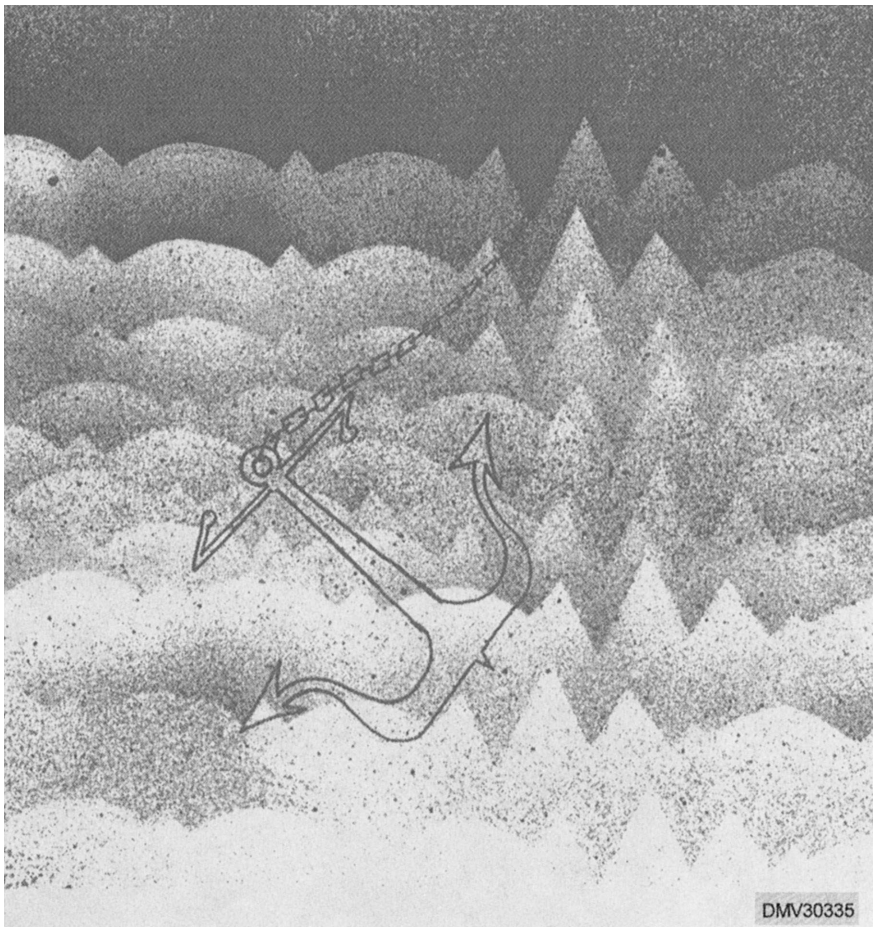

Figure 6-30.—Layering masks in an illustration.

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Increasing or decreasing distance between the airbrush and the paper surface

Increasing or decreasing the distance between the airbrush and the surface of the paper affects the width and wetness of the spray pattern. Increasing distance between the airbrush and the paper surface will increase the spray pattern. It will also apply a lighter tone, which dries faster creating a fine barely discernable wisp of color. Decreasing the distance between the airbrush and paper surface lessens the spray pattern applying a heavier, wetter layer of paint that the air from the brush further disburses in spidery lines. This effect is called the centipede effect.

Figure 6-31 illustrates the centipede effect resulting from the airbrush held closely to the paper surface.

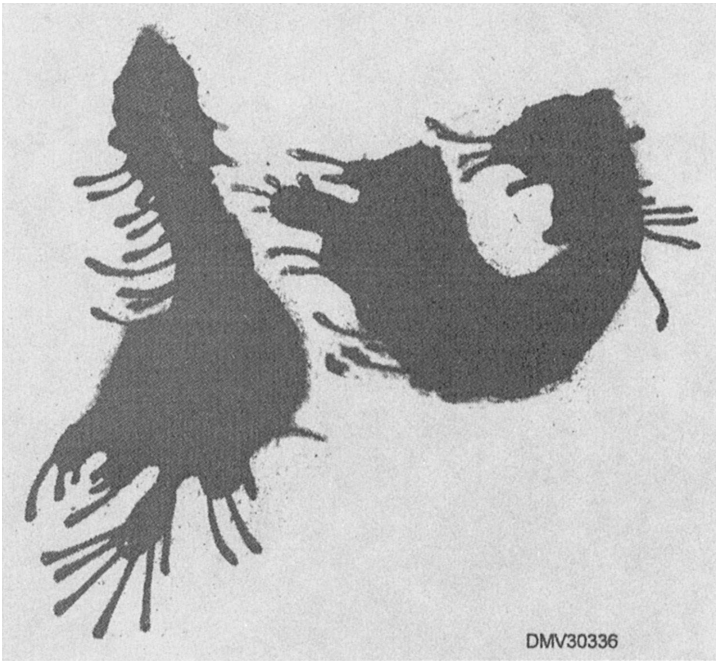

Figure 6-31.—The centipede effect.

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Changing the angle between airbrush and paper surface

Changing the angle between the airbrush and the paper surfaces can create an effect enhanced by any texture in the paper.

Figure 6-32 is examples of patterns sprayed at various angles over differently textured paper surfaces.

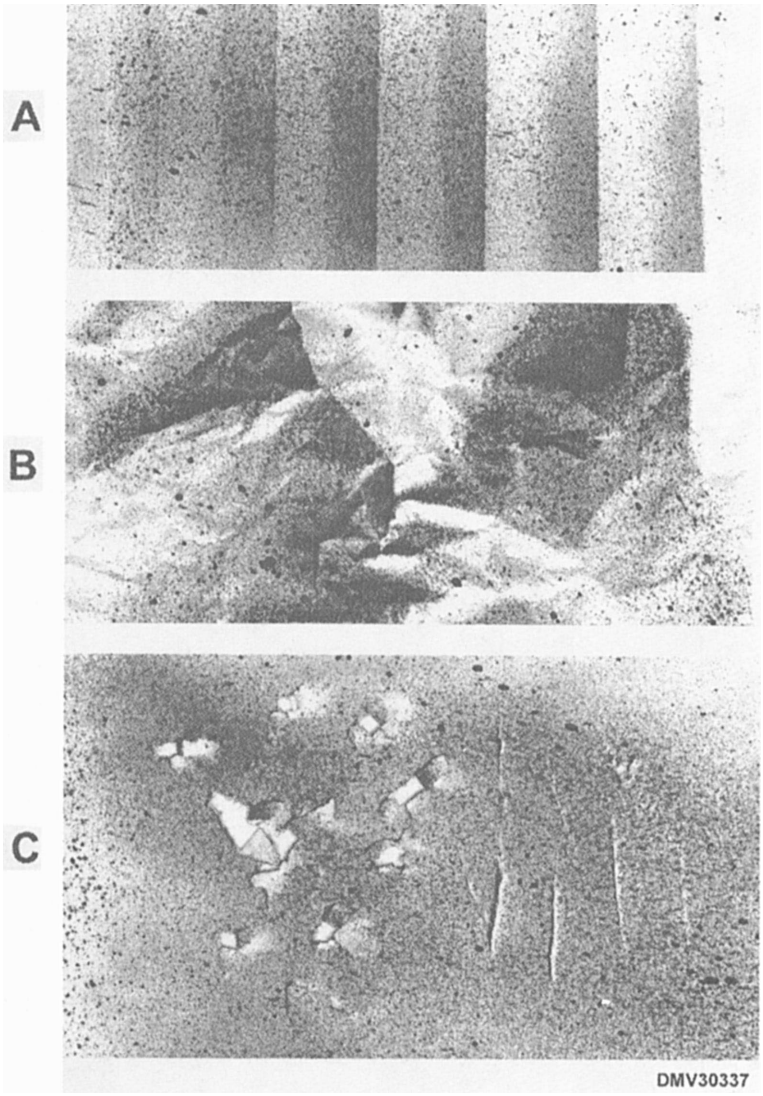

Figure 6-32.—Spray patterns on variously textured surfaces: A. Accordian folded; B. Crumpled paper; C. Torn paper.